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THE SPIRIT OF PARTY.

CHAPTER the FIRST.

Being an

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE Knight *of the* Bridge.

Addreſſed to the People *of* IRELAND.

Printed in the Year 1753.

(PRICE, THREE-PENCE.)

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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Chapter the FIRST.

My COUNTRYMEN,

A Certain Husbandman, returning homeward at Evening, perceived, from an Eminence, that there was an extraordinary Tumult in the Town of which he was a Native and Inhabitant,

bitant, and on a nearer Approach diſcerned who the Combatants were.

Now, had this Town, which contained his Houſe, Family, and Relations, been aſſaulted by a Body of Enemies from abroad, he could not have heſitated a Moment what Side to chuſe, in that Caſe, he could have had no Arguments to form, no Doubts whereon to deliberate, no Queſtions to aſk; Inclination, Intereſt, Equity, every Impulſe divine and human would inſtantly have ruſhed upon him and impelled him to the Reſcue of his Country and Kindred. But, obſerving, that, inſtead of any foreign Aſſaults or In-

Invaſion, a Number of his Fellow Townſmen had fallen together by the Ears, Countrymen againſt Countrymen, Relations againſt Relations, and Friends againſt Friends, though he thought it baſe to be an idle and unconcerned Spectator, yet here he found deep Cauſe for Conſideration and Demur, while he yet knew not who were the Injured or who the Aggreſſors, while he delayed to aſſiſt even Thoſe whom he loved moſt, for fear of offending Theſe who were alſo intitled to his Regard and Protection.

Had this Huſbandman been a Man of precipitate Affections, or One who made light of Juſtice

or

or Duty, he would neither have been ſolicitous in his Inquiries nor tedious in his Reſolves, in ſpite of ſome ſhort Feelings of Compunction, he would warmly have joined wherever his Inclinations had led, he would thereby have carryed Encreaſe to the Miſchief and to the Tumult, and would probably have become the greateſt of Enemies to that very Party he intended to befriend, by ſupporting in them a Spirit of Malice and Contention.

But, as he happened to be a Man, who, in order to determine the Motives of Action, was accuſtomed to aſk himſelf this ſhort and ſimple Queſtion, *What ought*

I to do? he ſeldom failed of ſpeedy and due Information. He interpoſed, he inquired, he did his beſt to check, to perſuade, to appeaſe, to reconcile, and equally to reſtore All to Concord and Amity. When he found this impracticable, he next uſed his Endeavours to withold Thoſe who yet were quiet from mixing in the Fray. But, as this alſo happened to exceed his Influence, he laſtly took up Arms againſt Thoſe whom he perceived to be the Wrong Doers, in order *equally to ſerve both Parties by cauſing Juſtice to prevail*; for he conſidered, that the Prevalence of Juſtice ever was and ever will be the Intereſt of the Public, nay, that *it muſt*

finally

finally be more the Intereſt of each Man living that Truth ſhould be triumphant, than that he himſelf ſhould be triumphant in any Conteſt againſt Truth.

HERE, a Reader, of a quick Temper or warm Imagination, may be haſty to inquire, and perhaps to conjecture, the Cauſes, the Parties, and the Conſequences of this Affray; but as I have not the ſame Reaſon for being in the ſame Hurry, in order to inform him duely, I ſhall proceed deliberately.

WITH this View, I find it abſolutely incumbent to premiſe that the Inhabitants of the aforeſaid

ſaid Town were Tenants in Common, where, though Each held ſeveral little Properties apart, and wholly excluſive of the Property of Others, yet the great the important the durable Property of Each, however it conſiſted, in Poſſeſſions or Privileges by Leaſehold, by Charter, or Cuſtom eſtabliſhed, was equally the Claim and the Property of All, they participated alike of it as of Air or of Light, it was the Bond of their Community, it was that alone which made them a Society or Conſtitution, and Intereſt, which generally divides Mankind, herein ſerved to ſtrengthen this People by joining them together.

AMONG Perſons thus formed to a Community of Intereſts it is evident that two Cauſes of Quarrel may ariſe, the One for private, the Other for public Concerns, the One perſonal and confined, the Other ſocial and indeterminable, the Firſt equal to and reſpecting Individuals alone, the Second equal to and reſpecting the whole Community.

NOW, as much Diſpute hath ariſen, among the Learned and the Politicians of thoſe Days, touching the Nature and Juſtice of the aforeſaid Quarrel, as, whether the ſame was of a private or ſocial Import? and how far the

Public

Public had a Right to intermeddle? I muſt beg ſome ſhort Attention to a few Words on this Head, before I can proceed with due Propriety in my Tale.

In reſpect to any Cauſe of private Quarrel, in any Community ſo aſſociated by Intereſts and ordered by Laws, ſhould any Member thereof be injured by Another, the Party injured hath firſt a Right to uſe ſuch perſonal Powers as Nature provided for his Defence or Vindication, and, ſhould theſe prove inſufficient, he hath a further Reſource in the Laws of ſuch Society: But, he hath not a Right by *Hue and Cry* to raiſe the whole Poſſe of his

Country

Country, nay it would be iniquitous in him ſo to call off the Attention and interrupt the Buſineſs and Peace of the Public, becauſe public Peace and Buſineſs, being the Concern of All, muſt be more than equivalent to the Intereſt or Concern of any Individual.

Such a *Hue and Cry* would be like the Clamour of a certain impudent Jeſter who alarmed the whole Neighbourhood by a Cry of Fire at Midnight, the Panic became general for ſuch they thought the Concern, they aroſe, they inquired, and were informed, by this Impertinent, that a few Mugs of good Liquor would be ſuffi-

ſufficient to extinguiſh all the Fire he complained of, the People accordingly took the Joke as they ought and quenched the Flame of his Thirſt in a Horſe Pond.

Now, if no Man hath a Right to call up the Public, in order to redreſs an actual Grievance, much leſs hath he a Right to rowze and alarm them where that Grievance is barely imaginary or diſputable, and leaſt of all hath he a Right to ſummon their Aid to ſupport and abett him in that which is wrong. And, where no Man hath a Right to call the Public, Iniquity muſt be multiplied ſhould the Public interfere.

WITH

WITH respect to the juſt Cauſes for public Complaint and Quarrel, they are, no doubt, many and various, but then ſuch Cauſes muſt ever be of public Concern, the Concern muſt in no Caſe be private, muſt in no Caſe be partial, it muſt pervade the Conſtitution, it muſt reſpect the whole Community.

IN ſuch Caſes it may not be merely excuſable, it may be lawful, it may be the Duty of a People, to withſtand Kings, and Princes, and Potentates, and Powers, to the laſt Stretch of their Might, and to the laſt Moment of their Exiſtence.

BUT

But then, a People's being buſied or concerned about an Affair, does not always infer that ſuch is the Concern or the Buſineſs of that People.

We have heard of mighty Emperors who have been buſied in catching Flies, and of Heroes who have been wonderfully expert at the Diſtaff, but, ſurely, neither of theſe was the Province of an Hero or an Emperor. A whole Nation, in their collective or repreſentative Body, may be as earneſtly employed, as ſolicitous, nay as ſolemn, in the Concern of Chaſeing or Preſerving a little Animal called a Hare, as the

Senate

Senate of *Rome* was, in the Chaſe of their great Enemy and the Preſervation of their Commonwealth, when the Ambaſſadors of *Pyrrhus* took them for an Aſſembly of Gods.

Now, as a whole Nation may be very impertinently concerned, a whole Nation alſo may be very factiouſly employed.

By a Faction is generally underſtood, a ſmaller Body of a People ardently combined in Sentiment and Endeavour towards the attaining ſome partial Point againſt Government: But a Faction may be more truely and inherently defined, a Body of People, whe-

whether ſmall or great, of the Governors or the Governed, combined in an Attempt againſt Conſtitution. If this Combination is of the Rulers, to invade, or abridge the Poſſeſſions or Privileges of the People, it may properly be intitled a Faction of the Court. If this Combination is of the People to invade, or to obſtruct the conſtitutional Powers of their Rulers, it may properly be intitled a Faction of the Country.

THE Examples, that occur in the Proceſs of our Hiſtory, will beſt ſerve at once to explain and illuſtrate the Utility and Truth of the above Obſervations.

IT IS RECORDED of the above Town and Parts adjacent, that they made One of ſeveral Manors of which one Perſon was Lord.

The People had many Poſſeſſions, and Liberties, and Privileges, which they held independent of the Will of their Lord; but their chief Privilege conſiſted in appointing the Perſons who conſtituted the Manor-Court, and thoſe Perſons had the further Privilege of appointing their proper Seneſchal; and, however uncommon the Caſe may appear, they had holden theſe Rights, quite Time out of Memory, independent of the Will or Dictates

Dictates of any Lord that had ever preſided over the ſaid Manor. For, as all the ſaid Poſſeſſions, and Liberties, and Privileges, were conſtitutional and of common Concern to the Society, they were always held to be a juſt Subject of public Claim and Aſſertion.

The Lord, on the other Hand, over and above the uſual Rents and Duties reſerved, had a Right to fill up certain Offices among the People; and, tho' it was a Matter of partial and private Concern, and generally of a very inſignificant Import, whether this Man or that Man, or t'other Man was named, yet, the Right of Nomination, becoming Part of the Conſtitution,

ſtitution, thereby became alſo a public Concern, and the People were therefore intereſted in aſſerting and maintaining to their Lord the ſaid Right.

For, though the due Adminiſtration of the aforeſaid Offices might diſpenſe much Good here and there among the People, yet no material Damage could poſſibly accrue, from the bad Morals or Conduct of the Officers, to the Society; as thoſe Officers, notwithſtanding the Favour of their Lord, were ſtill left ſubjected and expoſed to the Laws, as alſo accountable to the Court of the ſaid Manor, over whoſe Judgment the ſaid Lord had no Controul.

Such

SUCH was the Balance of Rights, and ſuch the Bond of Connection, between the aforeſaid Manor and the aforeſaid Lord; their Powers were ſupported by the ſame Foundation, their Intereſts were interwoven in the ſame Web.

BUT, in the Days of which we are writing, there aroſe an extraordinary Man among this People. He was a Native and Inhabitant of the ſaid Manor, and had Poſſeſſions of a conſiderable Value therein. He was ſaid to be endowed with every manly Excellence, wiſe, valiant, eaſy, affable, humane; an honeſt Dealer, an hoſ-

hoſpitable Neighbour, a pleaſing Companion, a kind Maſter, a tender Parent, and a ſtaunch Friend.

SUCH Virtues could not long be concealed in a Corner, they ſoon gained him the Love, and that Love gained him the Reſpect, and that Reſpect gained him the Confidence of all this People.

THEY intruſted him with their private, they adviſed with him in all their public Concerns, they unanimouſly voted him a Member of their Manor-Court, and, on the Death of the Seneſchal, he was as unanimouſly choſen by that Court to ſucceed him.

THE

THE Fame of the rare Qualities of this new Seneſchal could not be long a Secret to the Ear of the Lord, and this Lord kindly conceived that he could not do an Act of greater Beneficence to his People than to honour him with his Confidence and to grace him with his Favours.

HERE, READER, let me pauſe, let me ſtop a while on the Entrance into the Regions of Ambition, on the Bound that divides the perſonal from the public Province, on that dangerous Limit which Goodneſs is ſo ſeldom permitted to paſs. Let me look back with Reverence to the Virtues recited

cited, let me look forward with Pity on the Faults that are to come.

For, as *Janus* was impreſſed with a Duplicate of Faces, Each looking a different Way and wholly contraſted in Features to the Other, ſuch is the double Portrait of this renowned Seneſchal which the Annals of thoſe Times exhibit to your View. The firſt Part of this Hiſtory hath preſented you with the one Picture, the ſecond ſhall furniſh you with the Reverſe.

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End of the First Chapter.